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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY USSR (Latvia)

REPORT

SUBJECT Cabinet Members During the First Communist Regime

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1. [] the first Communist cabinet of Latvia was composed of eight members and was set up shortly after the Soviet occupation of 1940. In order to make the membership appear as though it were not a solid Communist front and Communist-dominated there were several positions occupied by non-Communists. These positions dealt with more or less technical phases of government and the appointees had little, if anything, to say about the actual operation of the government. Prior to the Soviet occupation there were no open Communist Party members in Latvia inasmuch as the Party had been outlawed and membership was illegal.
2. August Kirchenstein was the first premier of the Communist cabinet of 1940. During the German occupation of Latvia Kirchenstein fled to the USSR in July 1941 and on his return to Latvia with the Soviet forces in 1944 he was appointed to the position he now holds (May 1953) as president of the Latvian SSR. In his present post Kirchenstein is but a figurehead and has no actual power. He acts on behalf of the state in formal occasions and for state ceremonies, such as the awarding of medals. [] he was appointed to this position because the Soviets felt that he was popular with the people. []

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3. (fnu) Kovik was the actual power behind the first Communist cabinet due to his position as head of the MVD.

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4. Vilis Lacis was another member of the first Communist cabinet.

Lacis is now (May 1953) the premier of the Latvian SSR in his capacity as chairman of the council of ministers.

5. (fnu) Kalnberzins was, and still is, the first secretary of the Latvian Communist Party.

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6. Julius Lacis, was the first commissar of education.

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7. (fnu) Jagers was the commissar of communications and transportation in the first cabinet, a position he occupied for but a matter of a few months in 1940.

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8. Paul Lejins was the first commissar of agriculture and served on the Communist cabinet for a brief period in 1940.

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